

47 HONEYCOMB ROAD (HOUSE)  
Victory Villa  
Middle River  
Baltimore County  
Maryland

HABS MD-1219  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### 47 HONEYCOMB ROAD (House)

HABS No. MD-1219

**Location:** 47 Honeycomb Road, Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland

**Significance:** This prefabricated wood frame house is an example of defense worker housing built in the Victory Villa neighborhood during World War II. Many residents of Victory Villa worked at the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company plants in Middle River. Victory Villa's street plan was laid out by landscape architect Hale Walker.

**Description:** 47 Honeycomb Road is a modest side gable, one-story Cape Cod dwelling. Two large windows face the road, while the entrance is on the side gable end under a small gable porch roof. A shed roof extension is at the rear of the structure. Many of the identical wood frame houses in this neighborhood have been heavily altered, but 47 Honeycomb Road's original form is still visible. This structure currently has aluminum siding and an asphalt shingle roof.

**History:** Although somewhat altered and under redevelopment pressure, Middle River offers an outstanding collection of World War II-era national defense resources in its buildings, land-use patterns, and community institutions. Between 1939 and 1943, the number of employees at the Glenn L. Martin Company airplane manufacturing facilities in Middle River, Maryland mushroomed from 3,000 to 52,000. The small town of Middle River, with 161 residents in 1939, was unprepared and unequipped to house the massive influx of newcomers needed to man the defense production effort.<sup>1</sup>

The Martin Company started the expansion of residential facilities for its workers in Middle River even before the United States entered the conflict. Then the company called on the Federal government to continue these efforts. Lanham Act funds were used to develop temporary and permanent housing for defense workers in Middle River – the permanent housing neighborhoods were Aero Acres, Stansbury Estates, and Victory Villa. In 1941, the Maryland State Planning Commission hired Hale Walker, planner for Greenbelt, and Irving C. Root of the National Park Service to prepare a master plan for Middle River. Their plan incorporated many garden city features already started by the Martin Company housing – pedestrian paths to playgrounds and schools, curving residential streets separate from the new dual highways of Martin and

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Breihan, "Necessary Visions: Community Planning in Wartime," *Maryland Humanities* 71 (November 1998): 11.

Eastern Boulevards, and neighborhood strip shopping centers. At first the government provided trailers for workers near the factory, but then during 1942, 1,100 prefabricated plywood houses were built in the new neighborhood of Victory Villa by the Farm Security Administration.<sup>2</sup>

Most of these modest Cape Cod structures are single family dwellings arranged on individual lots on a grid pattern of streets. A number of duplex structures were built on the east side of the subdivision, mainly along Torque Way. Some gentle curves and a series of cul-de-sacs helped relieve the severity of the grid plan.

**Sources:** Jack Breihan, "Necessary Visions: Community Planning in Wartime," *Maryland Humanities* 71 (November 1998): 11-14.

Isabelle Gournay et. al. "Modern Movement in Maryland – Context Essay," Draft (December 2002).

Sanborn Map Company, Middle River, Maryland. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1948.

**Historian:** Lisa Pfueller Davidson, 2006

### **Project**

**Information:** This short form history was prepared to supplement photographic documentation of World War II-era resources in Middle River. During 2004-05 HABS staff photographer James Rosenthal photographed a series of sites in Baltimore City and County in preparation for the *Buildings of Maryland* publication. Maryland Historical Trust sponsored the photography project and is producing *Buildings of Maryland* as part of the Society of Architectural Historians' *Buildings of the United States* series.

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<sup>2</sup> Breihan, 12-13.